

**EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES**

**Meeting of July 2, 2008**

Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center  
3300 Briggs Chaney Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

**Members Present:** Kim Bobola, PhD (Chair), Colleen Ionata (Vice Chair), Bill Strassberger (Parliamentarian), Thomas Aylward, Tracy DuPree Davis, Esq., G. Stanley Doore, Marva R. Deskins, Esq., Will Kenlaw, Allan Mulligan, Prasiddh Sinha, John Thomas, and Andre Carl Whisenton.

**Members Absent:** Sheala Durant (Secretary), Kimberly Y. Campbell, PhD, Kim Jones and Benoy Thomas.

**Staff:** Chuck Crisostomo, (Assistant Director, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center); and Anjoo Chohda (Senior Executive Administrative Aide, EMRSC)

**Guests:** Delegate Karen S. Montgomery (The Maryland House of Delegates, 14<sup>th</sup> District), Captain Jane McCarthy, Claire Iseli (Staff, Councilmember Don Praisner's office), Scott Graham (Executive Assistant Chief, Fire and Rescue), Pete Piringer (Fire and Rescue), Oscar Garcia (Fire and Rescue), Frank Caruso (Greencastle Lakes Civic Association/Burtonsville Business Association/Citizens Involved), Allegra Gang (new resident), Lydia Kenlaw (Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church-Silver Spring), Mara M. Parker (Staff, Councilmember Marc Elrich's office), Barbara Foresti (White Oak Master Plan Committee), Maura Lynch (Montgomery County State's Attorney's office), Amber Parcher (Gazette).

**Call to Order:** The chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

**Citizen's Forum:** Chair Bobola welcomed everyone. Guests were asked to introduce themselves to the Board, and address any concerns or issues they had.

**Allegra Gang**, a new resident of East County, is concerned about cars that park in fire lanes, and wants to know the procedures to follow and department to be contacted. Chair Bobola called on representatives from Fire and Rescue Services who had offered to address this question. In response, Scott Graham (Executive Assistant Chief, Fire and Rescue) indicated he would look into the details of this matter and take action. Chuck Crisostomo (Assistant Director, EMRSC) added that residents could also call the offices of Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center.

**Maura Lynch** announced that the State's Attorney's office received notification that they had received a grant to fund their work on gangs/crime prevention.

**Speakers:** Chair Bobola announced that Delegate Karen S. Montgomery would present information regarding a bill she initiated to establish a post-traumatic stress disorder clinic at Montgomery General Hospital for returning war veterans. Dr. Jane McCarthy will be the co-presenter.

## **Delegate Karen Montgomery**

**Delegate Karen S. Montgomery** congratulated the Board for the services it provides the community and making a positive difference for East County. She also thanked Colleen Ionata for extending an invitation for the opportunity to speak at this ECCAB meeting.

Delegate Montgomery informed the Board that the State recently passed this bill, House Bill 372. The bill is intended to address the specific needs of returning veterans (e.g., health problems such as depression caused by separation from family, anxiety, behavioral and alcohol problems) and to assist them in transitioning back to their families and our communities. A funding source has not yet been identified nor received, despite the passage of the bill. The challenge that remains is to find the money to support this program.

Delegate Montgomery suggested that ECCAB could request that County Council expedite Bill 23-08 which proposes to establish the Commission on Veterans Affairs for Montgomery County. For example, this commission could: (1) serve as a clearinghouse for information and programs that will assist in meeting the needs of veterans; (2) institute and conduct programs that promote the rights and opportunities for veterans; and (3) assist in planning appropriate public acknowledgment of the contributions made by veterans.

**Dr. Jane McCarthy** introduced herself as a former Army Nurse who served in Vietnam in 1971. Dr. McCarthy shared information regarding Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Thousands of returning soldiers are struggling with the symptoms of this disorder. At the same time, there is a critical need for additional mental and behavioral health services. Treatment is available for returning veterans. However, there are long waits, and facilities are located in other jurisdictions.

Dr. McCarthy has identified a need to establish a treatment center for PTSD in Montgomery County. Medstar is working with Montgomery General Hospital, and setting up a foundation for this purpose.

A Q&A session with Board members followed. Stan Doore requested additional information about collaborative partnerships with existing agencies; Tracey Dupree Davis inquired about private sector and university partnerships; and Prasiddh Sinha suggested partnering with the Commission on Veterans Affairs. Tom Aylward suggested that a letter of support for Bill 23-08 could be written to the County Council.

Dr. McCarthy concurred that a letter from ECCAB to the County Council requesting the expeditious review of the Bill 23-08 would be helpful.

**Chair Bobola** thanked Delegate Montgomery and Dr. McCarthy for sharing this information with the Board.

## **Officer Scott Graham**

In following up a previous presentation to ECCAB, **Officer Scott Graham**, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Fire and Rescue, was invited to present additional information to the Board about

the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Transport Fee. Also attending the meeting were Public Information Officer Pete Piringer and Officer Oscar Garcia.

This proposal for the EMS Transport Fee was once introduced and once turned down. It addresses the concerns that were identified the first time around. Key information is as follows:

- The quality of patient care will continue to be the highest priority for Montgomery County's Fire and Rescue Service.
- A resident's ability or non-ability to pay will never be considered when providing service.
- The EMS transport fee the first year will raise approximately \$14 million in revenue that will be dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the needed staffing and apparatus that is included in the management plan.
- County residents will not pay anything under the new fee. The fee will be billed directly to health insurance companies, which have already factored the cost of patient transport into their current rate schedules.
- The fee will be waived for uninsured residents or residents whose insurance refuses to pay the fee.
- Montgomery County is one of the few counties in the region that is not already (or in the process of) collecting an EMS fee from insurance companies.
- There is no evidence that those in need of transport will be dissuaded from calling 911.
- The county would not enact legislation that would hinder the fundraising efforts of volunteer fire departments.
- Montgomery County will have agreements with area hospitals to provide insurance information for patients who are transported.
- When a resident makes the 911 call, the first priority will be to take care of the patient's medical needs. If deemed necessary, the patient will be transported to the hospital. If not, the EMS Transport Fee will not be charged to the insurance company.

A brochure detailing the elements of the EMS Transport Fee was disseminated, and a Q&A session followed. Board members were interested in finding out whether the EMS Transport Fee would affect health care costs for citizens; what is the actual cost of ambulance transport; and the funding splits with Volunteer Fire Departments. Chair Bobola thanked Officer Graham and fellow officers for providing this additional information about this fee.

## **Quad Reports**

**Chair Bobola** requested that Board members share their Quad Reports. The purpose was to describe characteristics of areas of East County and any special issues that are emerging from these areas.

**John Thomas** proposed that the Board could mail a letter of introduction to organizations and businesses located in their Quads. This would serve as a marketing task, and could replace the task of calling upon them.

### **Thomas Aylward – Quad I (Fairland)**

- A charrette was held on June 19<sup>th</sup> to engage the community in the development of the Burtonsville Legacy Plan. The purpose was to identify the best plan for revitalizing the Burtonsville central business district. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs organized the event, and ECCAB hosted it. Planners from the consulting firms of Basile Baumann Prost Cole and Associates, along with Rhodeside and Harwell presented several alternatives.
- The renaming ceremony of the Fairland Library and Fairland Recreation Center to Marilyn J. Praisner Library and Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center was held on June 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The county's CIP Construction Schedule is a helpful tool for keeping up-to-date with the road projects in the region.

### **John Thomas - Quad 2 (White Oak)**

- The Federal Research Center, in the White Oak area, is another large-scale project in East County. Progress at this center has been steady over the past 5 years.
- Maryland National Park and Planning has purchased an office in Hillandale.
- Residents in the Hillandale area are concerned that zoning laws are being violated. Specifically, as a result of houses being turned into churches, there are parking and noise problems. Residents are requesting clarification as to whether churches are allowed in all zones.

### **Colleen Ionata - Quad 3 (Colesville)**

- Carl Whisenton and Colleen Ionata contacted the elementary schools located in Quad 3, and received responses from principals that confirmed their commitment to contact ECCAB if any need surfaces.
- The video store, formerly located at the Colesville Shopping Center on New Hampshire Avenue, has moved.
- The White Oak Library has expressed a need to expand, and this requires more funding. The library has had new computer systems installed.

### **Andre Carl Whisenton**

- The ICC will have minimal impact on the citizens of the Tamarack Civic Association. However, the association wants to know what impact that the ICC will have on Fairland Road. The question is: Will the State Highway Administration be constructing sound barriers?

### **Marva Deskins – Quad 4 (Cloverly)**

- Benoy Thomas and Marva Deskins met with businesses in Cloverly.
- Marva met with the Project Manager at the Good Hope Community Center. This community center has the following needs: (1) the exercise program is not open to public, and should be; (2) funding is needed to expand the parking lot, especially on weekends; (3) the center is too small, and (4) the limited amount of space is shared with the Police Action League (PALS) Honors Program.

- Concerns were raised by the principal of Charles Drew Elementary school in terms of the adequacy of programs offered at the Good Hope Community Center. Specifically, the children in need of these programs (i.e., PALS Honors Program) are not getting them.
- An issue in the Cloverly community involves the students' safety, in terms of cutting through the wooded area to go to the Safeway.
- At Charles Drew Elementary School, there is concern regarding student safety and the construction of the ICC. Specifically, with the new construction, there will be construction workers working in the areas adjacent to the school. This raises concerns about student safety.
- Currently, there are only two people assigned to this quad. This limits the spread of contacts that can be made. A suggestion is to reconsider the number of individuals that are assigned to Quads, or to re-envision the Quads.

**Approval of Minutes:** Chair Bobola asked members of the board to review the meeting minutes of June 4, 2008 for revisions. Stan Doore proposed minor edits.

**[July 2, 2008 - 1]** A motion to approve the minutes of June 4, 2008 as amended was offered. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

**Council's Report: Claire Iseli**

- County Council has appointed two new members, Joseph Alfandre and Amy Presley, to the County Planning Board.
- Burtonsville Day will take place on September 27, 2008, and Councilmember Don Praisner will be the Grand Marshall.
- Stan Doore has emailed the Board members information about a meeting that was held this week with residents of Calverton, the Council's Attorney, and representatives from the County Police Department regarding gang problems at the Hollywood Ballroom in East County. There are on-going discussions about how to resolve these issues, some of which are serious.

**Director's Report:** Chuck Crisostomo, Assistant Director on behalf of Anise Key Brown

- With regard to the Burtonsville Legacy Plan, approximately 65 residents attended the meeting of June 19. The draft final report should be ready for review by the end of August.
- The movie presentation of the *Iron Ladies of Liberia* was held on June 19 at the Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center. This State Department production was an inspiring video about the first female president of Liberia.
- Save the Date. On October 18, the East County Leadership Summit will be held at the Marilyn J. Praisner Recreation Center. Marva Deskins and the Outreach Committee are putting the program together. Marva has asked that Board members pass along this announcement to the business contacts that they have, and to share copies of their databases with the EMRS Center. The East County Leadership Summit is not targeted to a general audience. It is designed to attract community leaders. The last summit drew approximately 200 community leaders from East County.

- There are shoplifting issues at the Briggs Chaney Shopping Center. In response, EMRSC spoke with business owners in at the center who shared their concerns. Recently, the owner of Subway Deli was assaulted in his office. In the past 6-8 months, these issues have been brought to the attention of the 3rd District Police. The Center has requested an increase in Police patrols.
- A Capital Improvements Projects report was distributed. The report included updated information on projects underway in East County.
- The Bioscience Center project is on track. Consultant proposals are being considered for the development of the site on Industrial Boulevard.

### **Chair's Report: Kim Bobola**

- Mr. Sinha will be traveling to India for personal reasons, and, as a result, is tendering his resignation from the Board. Chair Bobola recognized him for his active role on the Board. Additionally, Will Kenlaw, Tracy Davis and Andre Carl Whisenton were recognized as departing members of the Board, and for their outstanding service on the Board.
- A volunteer is needed to summarize the results of the surveys collected at community events. These results will be included in the Annual Report. Bill Strassberger and Marva Deskins volunteered to help with this task.
- No committee meetings will be held next week. Committees are asked to submit material for the 2007-2008 Annual Report.
- Stan Doore has passed along information regarding the ICC Bikeway Public Hearing that will be held July 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. at Maryland Park and Planning Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring.
- Colleen Ionata is interested in serving as the ECCAB representative on the Fire Station Site Selection Committee.
- The US Postal Service in Burtonsville Shopping Center will be temporarily relocating to Dino Drive.
- Board members were reminded to hold the date, October 18, for the East County Leadership Summit.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Services Committee: Colleen Ionata, Chair**

- The Services Committee is waiting for a response from Montgomery County Public Schools on "Choosing Civility." The book is currently being reviewed, and a decision on the outcome of the review could be made by September.

#### **Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee: Tom Aylward, Chair**

- This committee is participating in the development of the Burtonsville Legacy Plan. Additional work will be done by the consultants on a Community Legacy Grant. The timeline for this entire process is aggressive.

**Outreach Committee:** Marva Deskins, Chair

- As mentioned earlier, the East County Leadership Summit will be held on October 18, 2008. The list of invitees has been expanded to include two additional departments from Montgomery County government.
- The Outreach Committee is asking the Board for support. Six pairs of volunteers are needed to serve as facilitators and recorders.

**Old Business:** There was no old business.

**New Business:**

**Bill Strassberger:** motioned that the Board support proposed Bill 25-08 for the Emergency Medical Services Transport Fee. There is a need to support EMS and Fire and Rescue Services. Residents do not have to get into a discussion of funding splits, since the revenue will be 100% dedicated to staffing, apparatus, and volunteer support. There is no evidence that the EMS Transport Fee deters anyone from calling for an ambulance. Since the cost of transport is already included in insurance coverage, and is a small portion of coverage, a citizen would be challenged to spot how much this would increase insurance costs, as they will increase any way. Fire and Rescue Services needs our support. A brief discussion followed.

**[July 2, 2008 - 2]** A motion to support the Emergency Medical Services Transportation fee as proposed by Fire and Rescue Services was offered. The motion was seconded, and passed without objection.

A hearing on Bill 25-08 is scheduled on Tuesday, July 8.

**Colleen Ionata:** made a motion to support establishing the Commission on Veterans Affairs.

**[July 2, 2008 - 3]** A motion to write a letter to the County Executive and Council President to establish the Commission Veterans Affairs (Bill # 23-08) was offered. The motion was passed with no objection.

**Chair Bobola:** asked for the Board to vote on a representative to serve on the Fire Station Site Selection Committee.

**[July 2, 2008 - 3]** Colleen Ionata was nominated by Tom Aylward and seconded by Allan Mulligan to serve as the Board's representative on the Fire Station Site Selection Committee. The motion was unanimously passed.

**Allan Mulligan:** disseminated brochures and a CD detailing his research related to the Declaration of Independence.

**Stan Doore:** shared an email sent to Council member Nancy M. Floreen on Emergency Alert/Response System and an article posted in the Gazette on June 27, 2008 "Less Faith in Emergency Response – Council Members Criticize Handling of Water Main Break."

**Stan Doore:** spoke on a proposal for the use of HD Radio for broadcasting emergency and digital graphic road and weather information.

**[July 2, 2008 - 4]** A motion was passed to move the HD Radio and Emergency Alert/Response Notification system issue to the Services Committee.

**Stan Doore:** shared an email sent to Lieutenant Robert Carter, Deputy Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Police Station, on recommendations to combat gangs and violence in the county and an article from the Washington Times, (July 1, 2008) “Agencies join forces to tackle violent gangs” was disseminated. This was for information only.

Stan Doore attended a meeting of Montgomery County officials held at the Center to discuss disturbances at the Hollywood Ballroom, and in Silver Spring, as well as concerns about gangs. Several Departments, including the State’s Attorney’s office, attended the meeting. Lt. Carter is commended for his contributions to the discussion. Mr. Doore commented that responses were offered, but there is no coordination.

Stan Doore proposed that the county needs a set of standards and to publish written procedures regarding licensing facilities and events, such as the ones held at the Hollywood Ballroom. This information should be known to the public.

**[July 2, 2008 - 5]** Stan Doore made a motion to establish procedures and coordinate the efforts of county departments and agencies for these events. The motion was seconded, but failed.

**[July 2, 2008 - 6]** A motion was passed to refer the defeated Motion 5 to the Services Committee. This motion is to recommend Board action relating to standards and procedures for regulating these events.

**[July 2, 2008 - 7]** **Mr. Doore** made a motion to propose building a connecting road from Route 29 on the North, to go around the NW quadrant and NW perimeter of the Burtonsville Shopping Center, and to connect with Route 198 on the west. The motion was not seconded.

Stan Doore also disseminated the July issue of the “Calverton Current” newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned 9:50 p.m.

***The next meeting of ECCAB is scheduled for September 3, 2008.***